

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In a system comprising a real estate database containing information regarding commercial real estate properties, a method for disseminating information contained in the real estate database comprising:

receiving from a user a series of points on a map that define a polygonal search area;

receiving search attributes from the user;

searching the real estate database for properties within the polygonal search area that meet the search attributes; and

displaying, to the user, information about the properties within the polygonal search area that meet the search attributes.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the search attributes are specific to properties for lease.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying comprises plotting an icon on the map a location corresponding to a property within the polygonal search area that meets the search attributes.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising displaying a photograph of the property when a mouse pointer is positioned over the icon.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying comprises displaying a list of the properties within the polygonal search area that meet the search attributes, wherein the list provides property descriptions, property addresses, and property prices.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the polygonal search area is irregular.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the map is an aerial photograph.

8. A method for retrieving geographic-based commercial real estate data comprising:

receiving an area drawn on a map;

- converting the drawn area into pixels;
 - converting the pixels into latitude and longitude coordinates;
 - calculating a spatial index based on the latitude and longitude coordinates;
 - searching the commercial real estate database for properties matching the latitude and longitude coordinates and the spatial index; and
 - displaying the matching properties.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the drawn area is a radius, and wherein converting the drawn area into pixels comprises converting the drawn area into a bounding box defined by the length of the radius.
10. The method of claim 8, wherein the drawn area is a polygon, and wherein converting the drawn area into pixels comprises converting the drawn area into multiple quadrangles based on the polygon.
11. The method of claim 8, wherein the latitude and longitude coordinates are converted by sending an XML message to a mapping application.
12. The method of claim 8, further comprising receiving additional search attributes, and wherein searching comprises searching the commercial real estate database for properties matching the latitude and longitude coordinates, the spatial index, and the search attributes.
13. The method of claim 12, wherein the search attributes are specific to properties for lease.
14. The method of claim 12, wherein the search attributes include price per building square foot, gross acres, and year built.